

Memo from

To: Christy Turner

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CASBS

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Ethnic differentiation

This deserves much more discussion; it certainly is no affront.

If separatism went no further than 'jewishness' in the US today, I would be easy in my mind. What I do fear, of course, is that level of groupmindedness that fuels inter-group conflict - the nationalistic ideologies that stand a good chance of destroying us all, together.

I also wonder whether you want to encourage a diversification along ethnic-cultural lines, that often stifles an individual from the best expression of his individual genotype. I respect my cultural allegiance to my Jewish ancestry; but my involvement in the orthogonal community of rational science is even more meaningful to me. It is only the relaxation of Jewish separatism (on both sides of the frontier) that allowed me to become other than a rabbi.

So there is a dilemma. One cannot even expose a previously isolated culture to other inputs without risking a cultural flow that may extinguish the preexisting cultural adaptation (to follow through with your analogy to genetic speciation.) If you encourage the fixation of a Black dialect, do you not in fact discourage the youngsters whom you are thereby manipulating from a full and equal participation in other aspects of the world around them? The US-Jewish solution that you evidently admire has not preserved Yiddish as a viable language (that we still have to credit mainly to Hitler,) and certainly not as a first one.

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